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This is all the more necessary since they are intended for a class of readers who are incapable of sifting the true from the false.

In the book in hand statements similar to the following are frequent. "Many species . . . rise to the surface and lodge in the pellicle to form their seeds" (p. 19). Such a use of the word "seed" is unwarranted even in a popular treatise. On page 16 may be found this erroneous statement: "*Micrococcus agilis* is the only coccus which has flagella and active motion." On page 36 the word "attenuated" is used in such a way as to lead the unwary to believe that attenuation is synonymous with decrease in vegetative power. *Bacillus tuberculosis* is a well-known example of an organism which decreases in virulence as it increases in vegetative power in artificial culture. On page 68 is given a very questionable method for the diagnosis of cholera, viz., the direct examination of flakes of detached epithelium.

As types of loose or misleading sentences, which are very common, may be noted the following: "It will be understood that bacteria do not live in air" (p. 107), a statement that quite fails to express the meaning intended. "The gases (!) essential to plants are four, carbon dioxide, hydrogen, oxygen, and nitrogen" (p. 146); and again on p. 147, "Here then we have the necessary food of plants expressed in a sentence: *water, gases, salts, the most important and essential gas and some of the salts being combined in nitrates.*" "The reduction of a nitrite is a common property of bacteria" (p. 150). The expression "organismal process" (p. 29) is surely very unusual. "Pure cholera bacillus in suspension and typhoid bacillus in suspension were passed through these filters and not a single bacillus was detectable in the filtrate" (p. 80). While this loose diction may not lead to error, it does cost the reader much time to discover the intended meaning.

On the whole, the book is like so many other popular works, a mixture of good and bad, the accurate and the misleading. Because of the looseness and the actual error it can only be commended to the discriminating student, for whom, least of all, it was intended and who needs it least. For popular reading a better book is necessary.—F. L. STEVENS.

The forestry problem.

THE announcement that Yale University is to have a school of forestry, and the appearance of a number of publications dealing with different phases of the forestry question, show that the crusade for a better understanding of the problem is having its effect. A recent work by Mr. Bruncken on North American forests and forestry⁴ is not intended to be a guide for the professional forester, but rather to make clear to the general reader the exact condition of affairs. It is written for those who take a living interest in all

⁴BRUNCKEN, ERNEST: North American forests and forestry. Their relation to the national life of the American people. 8vo. pp. 262. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1900.

questions affecting the welfare of the nation, and who love the life of nature without standing apart from the more strenuous current of human affairs.

The chapter on the North American forest contains an excellent résumé of distribution of forests before they were changed by the influence of man. It is shown that the forest is controlled by certain definite factors and that the struggle of the forest with the prairie and the bog is constant, as is also the struggle between the individual trees of the same forest; so that a correct understanding of the complex conditions which determine the distribution of trees becomes of utmost importance in silviculture.

The next chapter contains a brief history of the relation of the forest to the growth of the nation. It was absolutely necessary for the pioneer to clear the forest, and the damage his immediate successors have done by carrying this destruction too far must be repaired by the present generation. The author takes a very optimistic view of the future condition of the forests.

Forest finance and management, forestry and government, protecting forests from fires and thieves, and forestry and taxation are so treated as to show that the author is well informed on these phases of the forestry problem. In chapters on reform in forestry methods, and forestry as a profession, a brief history of the reform is given and some mistakes are pointed out. Attention is called to the number of schools of forestry recently established, and to the practical results obtained by applying scientific methods to certain plots, which the Forestry Division of the U. S. Department of Agriculture is now encouraging owners to do.

The volume is not without literary merit; the author's style is clear and logical, and at times, as in the case of the description of a forest fire, fascinating. As the author well says, the question of forestry cannot be solved by sudden bursts of enthusiasm, and does not appeal to man's emotional nature. Sensible treatment of our forest wealth will come only through the education of the public along this line. The book deserves a wide reading because it will contribute to this end. — H. N. WHITFORD.

MINOR NOTICES.

IT is a pleasure to receive a paper which possesses so many good qualities as the recension of the Mexican and Central American Umbelliferæ lately issued by Messrs. Coulter and Rose.⁵ In examining this work one is impressed no less by its clear presentation of diagnostic and bibliographic essentials than by a judicious exclusion of irrelevant matter. The authors do not, for instance, attempt to give their work impressive proportions or an erudite appearance by adding under each genus and species all the synonymy which could have been cheaply compiled from the *Index Kewensis*

⁵ COULTER, J. M. and ROSE, J. N.: A synopsis of Mexican and Central American Umbelliferæ. Proc. Wash. Acad. Sci. 1: 111-159. Jan. 1900.